

The launch of the ARCADES project: Introducing dAta pRoteCtion AnD privacy issuEs at schoolS in the European Union (2014-2016)

press release

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On 7 November 2014 in Brussels the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) hosted the kick-off meeting of the ARCADES project (*Introducing dAta pRoteCtion AnD privacy issuEs at schoolS in the European Union*). This rather technical gathering was an official launch of the research project and enabled the partners, together with the project officer, to discuss its organisational matters.

The proposal for the ARCADES project was submitted in March 2014 for an award to the European Union's Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme, managed by the Directorate-General for Justice at the European Commission. It was successfully assessed in July 2014 and awarded, as the so-called action grant, to four partners – the Bureau of the Inspector General for Personal Data Protection (Poland) (co-ordinator) and the Information Commissioner of the Republic of Slovenia, the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (Hungary) and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium).

The critical need for privacy and data protection education

The concept of the project has been based on a 2009 Polish nation-wide programme for schools entitled *"Your data – your concern"*. A relatively high interest expressed by teachers in Poland concerning this programme has inspired the Inspector General to transfer it to the European level.

"Schools should teach pupils about personal data protection. The topics related to the protection of personal data can be incorporated in the curricula of various schools' subjects. Privacy and data protection may be included not only in the civic education", says Dr. Wojciech Rafał Wiewiórowski, Inspector General for Personal Data Protection (GIODO), the ARCADES project co-ordinator, adding: *"For example, during biology teachers can teach not only genetics but also the fact that the genome contains a lot of information about us".*

Prof. Dr. Paul De Hert (VUB) explained that *"the importance of awareness-raising and education activities in achieving the high level of the protection of privacy and personal data is unprecedented. Children have difficulties in understanding information provided on the processing of their personal information and are less aware of the implications of their decisions. What is even worse, many parents and schoolteachers have limited knowledge to provide useful guidance. Therefore this project is a crucial initiative in the European Union and I personally have high hopes for its success."*

Prof. Dr. Gloria González Fuster, senior researcher at the VUB's Research Group for Law, Science, Technology and Society (LSTS) explained: *"According to the draft for a General Data Protection Regulation proposed by the European Commission, all European supervisory*

authorities should in the future devote special attention to raise awareness about personal data protection issues among children".

The ARCADES project is directed at schoolteachers

The project aims to introduce at schools in the European Union data protection and privacy related content in order to shape informed and responsible attitudes thereto among school children and teens (6-19 years old). Among various strategies for the 18-month project, the consortium foresees:

- devising effective methods of educating children and youth on this issue, and
- producing a publication which will present the results of the project (i.e. a unified set of teaching aids including data protection principles, lessons' scenarios and other materials important in teaching in this field).

The project's partners will contribute to the project with their input as far as their own knowledge, experience and materials for schools are concerned.

In order to reach school children and teens with data protection knowledge, the project is directed to teachers of primary, secondary and high schools. A series of seminars for teachers, conducted by experts from respective data protection authorities (DPAs), will be organized in each partner's country in October 2015. The consortium will work together to produce, based on the already existing materials, a data protection and privacy teaching set which will be used during the two-day seminars for teachers. The received input from schools (following a planned contest for the best lesson scenario) will be included in the planned publication which will be disseminated to other DPAs in the European Union.

The project's main events will be

- a two-day seminar for teachers, during which the participating teachers will be called upon to attend a contest for the best lessons' scenario, and
- the final conference scheduled for January 2016 in Brussels, where the awarded best lesson scenarios will be presented.

According to Prof. Dr. Attila Péterfalvi, the President of the Hungarian National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (NAIH) *"the most effective and adequate way of finding out best teaching solutions on data protection is organizing a contest for teachers and his/her school children. This way the teaching material might become more interesting and much more acceptable, comprehensible by its audience. In the course of the contest DPAs could also receive useful input about the important privacy issues that children face nowadays."* Mr Péterfalvi also added – *"The ideas of educators and school children will certainly be the best sources for creating best model lessons, since this way data protection education will be tailored by those who are truly exposed to privacy risks."*

"It is extremely important to get the teachers on board. Apart from parents, they are the main contact point with the pupils and can many times be the first person pupils turn to when in trouble. That is why we want to get in touch with the teachers and get their feedback as well. We believe organizing a seminar for them is the best way to do it as it provides ample opportunities for answering their questions and also for learning from their experience" said Maja Lubarda, Legal Adviser at the Information Commissioner of Slovenia.

The expected results of the project

- An increased level of awareness of personal data protection and the right to privacy among teachers and pupils of primary, secondary and high school in order to achieve informed, responsible attitudes among them;
- An increased level of knowledge with regard to data protection and privacy issues among teachers and pupils of primary, secondary and high school;
- The publication which includes the results of the project (a unified set of teaching aids for teachers – leaflets, posters and printed documentation of data protection principles and lessons’ scenarios selected from the contest for schools);
- “The model scenario”, awarded in the contest for schools can set an example of the lesson devoted to data protection and privacy issues. The author (teacher) and his/her pupils will be awarded prize in each project’s partner countries. “The model scenario” will be included in the publication and will be presented during the final conference, which is going to take place in Brussels in January 2016, on the occasion of the 10th Data Protection Day;
- Strengthening cooperation not only between institutions who have joined the project but also between other European DPAs which could adapt the content of the publication on their national ground.

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